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for children,—which Miss Strickland thinks fit to designate as monomania, — proceeded, perhaps, from the idea that, if Philip should have a son by her, to inherit England and the Low Countries, this would secure for her some place in his affections. But this hope, too, was doomed to be unfulfilled. She had embarked her all in a single venture, and all was lost.

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#### ART. IX. — CRITICAL NOTICES.

1. — *Six Months in Italy.* By GEORGE STILLMAN HILLARD. Boston: Ticknor, Reed & Fields, 1853. 2 vols. 16mo.

LITTLE that is new remains to be told about Italy. Her life is in the past, and her history is written. Politically speaking, or with any reference to the events and interests of the present hour, Rome, Florence, and Naples are the most insignificant capitals in Europe. The interest which attaches to them is like that which covers Thebes and Nineveh with a mysterious charm; no one expects those solitudes to be peopled again, or their ancient glory to return. Italy, indeed, has exhausted her destiny. Twice has she been placed at the culminating point of power and renown, — once as the political mistress, and once as the home of the arts, of the civilized world. Whatever her future may be, it must be dwarfed by the remembrance of the glory that has passed away. Rome, it is true, still claims to be the head of Catholic Christendom; but her power, even in this respect, is only the lingering twilight of a sun that has set. The popedom is but a shadow of what it was; its spiritual thunders cannot disturb the repose of the feeblest prince in Europe; and in temporal matters, it is so rickety that it cannot stand without foreign aid. Every effort made to retrieve its fallen fortunes seems only to depress it still farther. Only six years ago, the world was called upon to admire that strange phenomenon, a reforming Pope, who was to cleanse the political sty and to regenerate Rome. A period of feverish excitement followed; but the difficulties were too great; one disappointment followed another, and, after a succession of disasters, the Pope became once more the tamest, the most conservative, and the pettiest of sovereigns. The people have shown themselves unworthy of freedom, as they are incapable of achieving it by their

own efforts. Thrice, within the lifetime of one generation, in 1820, in 1832, and again in 1848, the golden prize has been placed within their grasp; and thrice, by their feebleness, their lack of public spirit, and their brawls, they have wasted the fruits of success, and have fallen back paralyzed under the sway of superannuated despotisms.

But to the visitor from foreign lands, and especially to the educated American, Italy remains, and will ever remain, the most fascinating country in the world. Here, we are so accustomed to look forward into an indistinct but glorious future, that it is a relief to find ourselves compelled, by the genius of a different locality, to look back into a richly-storied and glorious past. Though new to the outward sense, the country is not strange to us. It has been made familiar by the studies of our youth, by associations connected with every province of the fine arts, and by much that has been inwrought into the literature of all nations. Even Greece, though it may kindle a warmer glow in the heart of the scholar, does not spread before him so rich and broad a field of interest, or inspire his enthusiasm on so many different subjects. Greece, during the Middle Ages, and, in fact, ever since the promulgation of Christianity, presents nothing more to us than many other countries in Europe. Its peculiar glories are all in the remote past; the voice with which it speaks to us comes only from a far distant antiquity, and is therefore often broken and indistinct. But the true life of Italy was prolonged to a comparatively recent period. There is much in her mediæval history over which the scholar and the man of taste lingers with an abiding thrill of pleasure, and a curiosity that can never be sated. And it is not mere association, or the recollection of what is no longer visible, that chains him to the spot. The past has left substantial and glorious memorials of itself; all Italy is strewn with them. A lifetime may be spent in study and admiration of them, and the feeling will still be that the work is incomplete. From the tower of the Capitol, we look down, on the one hand, into the Roman Forum, and our gaze extends, on the other, to the Vatican and the Castle of St. Angelo. In the museums, the statues of Bernini and Canova stand side by side with the Laocoon and the Apollo Belvidere. We can take in at a glance magnificent structures, that represent the various styles of architecture peculiar to almost every century in a period of over two thousand years. And all these things, as we have said, have the peculiar and tender charm that results from long familiarity with their history. We have read about them, thought of them, dreamed of them, till at last, when we actually see them, they appear to be old acquaintances, and yet have all the zest of novelty.

We can understand the enthusiasm, then, with which Mr. Hillard writes about Italy, and the taste which led him to confine his remarks almost entirely to art and external nature, and to pass hurriedly over all questions respecting the Italians of the present day. If he speaks of them at all, it is to describe their garb, aspect, and physical constitution, — to consider them as subjects for the sculptor and the painter. He writes like a scholar, a poet, an artist, and a lover of nature; not as a politician, an economist, or a philosopher. There were reasons, as we have shown, for preserving this limitation in respect to Italy; but the uniform observance of it also shows the prevailing bent of the writer's mind. Mr. Hillard describes admirably; but he does not willingly speculate or theorize. We shall not be considered as underrating the merit of his work, if we place its chief excellence in description. For, how rare the faculty is, adequately to paint in words what has deeply affected the imagination and the senses! How many a young traveller, ambitious of keeping a diary, has vainly endeavored to reproduce on paper, at eve, what has most entranced him during the day! Language seems powerless to convey a tithe of what he has felt; and, in a fit of impatience, the task is abandoned, and the diary is thrown into the grate. Mr. Hillard describes well, because he describes simply; the details are suppressed, or kept in the background; the leading peculiarity is set forth in few but fitly chosen words; and then the emotions kindled in the spectator are pictured with a warmth and breadth of language which brings the scene home to the imagination through the feelings. The mental picture thus formed may not even approximate the truth; for words can never appropriate the painter's art. But words may give us a foretaste of the emotions created by reality; and if the reader himself has seen the object described, they may inspire the fading remembrance of it once more with coloring and life. Mr. Hillard's volumes will be best appreciated by those who have already visited Italy; but they will also be a useful guide to those who have that pleasure yet to come. For our own part, the work brings so vividly before us many happy hours, now long past, that we know not how much of the pleasure which it gives is due to the author, and how much to the recollections that it vivifies only by a casual spark.

Mr. Hillard is a perfect master of soft, musical, and perspicuous diction, which, though often curiously artistic, always seems the natural garb of the thought it so gracefully conveys. It is relieved with a great variety of allusions and a luxuriant fancy, while it is so chastised by a severe taste, that no awkward or incongruous image, no slipshod or strained expression, ever comes to mar the general effect. If one

were inclined to be hypercritical, he might object, that its bright and even flow occasionally lapses into monotony, or causes the reader to lose sight of the principal thought in admiration of the language or the illustration. But even these qualities can hardly be deemed defects, when treating of such themes as Italian art and Italian scenery. Here, the most curious and brightly-pictured expressions, and the ripest fancy, seem at home; they breathe the spirit of that land which inspired Petrarch and Boccaccio, and sometimes softened even the stern genius of the great poet of Florence.

Mr. Hillard has judged wisely in not throwing his observations into the form of a journal. He says very little, indeed, of his personal adventures, and makes no complaint of hard fare, bad inns, or cheating landlords. True, the times are changed in this respect, since travellers used to tell so dolorous a story of the annoyances and discomforts that they suffered while exploring the remains of Roman grandeur, or feasting on Italian art. The vast influx of foreigners into Italy has introduced foreign fashions and foreign comforts; and one can now journey from Milan to Naples about as easily as from Boston to New York. Our author refers all persons who are curious about such particulars to that invaluable *vade mecum*, Murray's Guide Book; and contents himself with giving a series of descriptive sketches of the most remarkable objects of nature and art. His work conveys very faithfully, we think, the general impressions which these objects make on the mind of a well-informed traveller, of refined taste and a lively sensibility. Though imbued with the best fruits of thorough and extensive scholarship, it is singularly free from any touch of pedantry. It contains hardly a Latin quotation or a poetical extract from beginning to end. But all the information necessary to understand the picture, the statue, or the ruin, is given incidentally and without effort, from the stores of an overflowing mind. Three chapters, at the close of the second volume, give an agreeable and critical account of the most noteworthy books that have been written about Italy, from the time of Petrarch to the present day. Here will be found some useful hints for persons who desire to qualify themselves for a journey in the peninsula by studying the works of those who have preceded them. We are a little surprised not to find, upon our author's list, the interesting volumes of Mr. Whiteside, a distinguished Irish lawyer, who was travelling in Italy at about the same time with Mr. Hillard; or the amusing and instructive work of Mrs. Hamilton Gray, upon the sepulchres of Etruria. It does not appear, however, that the catalogue was designed to be complete.

We must not part from Mr. Hillard's work without giving some ex-

tract from it, which shall be a fair specimen of his manner. The following eloquent passage upon the Coliseum, (which we prefer to spell as Gibbon did,) will answer this purpose:—

“If as a building the Colosseum was open to criticism, as a ruin it is perfect. The work of decay has stopped short at the exact point required by taste and sentiment. The monotonous ring of the outer wall is everywhere broken, and, instead of formal curves and perpendicular lines, the eye rests upon those interruptions and unexpected turns, which are the essential elements of the picturesque, as distinguished from the beautiful and the sublime; and yet so much of the original structure is left, that the fancy can without effort piece out the rents and chasms of time, and line the interior with living forms. When a building is abandoned to decay, it is given over to the dominion of Nature, whose works are never uniform. When the Colosseum was complete, vast as it was, it must have left upon the mind a monotonous impression of sameness, from the architectural repetitions which its plan included; but now that it is a vast ruin, it has all that variety of form and outline which we admire in a Gothic cathedral. Not by rule and measure have the huge stones been clipped and broken. No contriving mind has told what masses should be loosened from the wall, or where they should lie when fallen. No hand of man has trained the climbing plants in the way they should go. All has been left to the will of time and chance, and the result is, that, though there is everywhere resemblance, there is nowhere identity. A little more or a little less of decay, — a chasm more or less deep, — a fissure more or less prolonged, — a drapery of verdure more or less flowing, — give to each square yard of the Colosseum its own peculiar expression. It is a wilderness of ruin, in which no two fragments are exactly alike.

“The material of which the Colosseum was built is exactly fitted to the purposes of a great ruin. It is travertine, of a rich, dark, warm color, deepened and mellowed by time. There is nothing glaring, harsh, or abrupt in the harmony of tints. The blue sky above, and the green earth beneath, are in unison with a tone of coloring not unlike the brown of one of our own early winter landscapes. The travertine is also of a coarse grain and porous texture, not splintering into points and edges, but gradually corroding by natural decay. Stone of such a texture everywhere opens laps and nooks for the reception and formation of soil. Every grain of dust that is borne through the air by the lazy breeze of summer, instead of sliding from a glassy surface, is held where it falls. The rocks themselves crumble and decompose, and thus turn into a fertile mould. Thus, the Colosseum is throughout crowned and draped with a covering of earth, in many places of considerable depth. Trailing plants clasp the stones with arms of verdure: wild flowers bloom in their seasons, and long grass nods and waves on the airy battlements. Life has everywhere sprouted from the trunk of death. Insects hum and sport in the sunshine: the burnished lizard darts like a tongue of green flame along the walls, and birds make the hollow quarry overflow with their songs. There is something beautiful and impressive in the contrast between luxuriant life, and the rigid skeleton upon which it rests. Nature seems to have been busy

in binding up, with gentle hand, the wounds and bruises of time. She has covered the rents and chasms of decay with that drapery which the touch of every spring renews. She has peopled the solitude and the silence with forms and voices. She has clothed the nakedness of desolation, and crowned the majesty of ruin. She has softened the stern aspect of the scene with the hues of undying youth, and brightened the shadows of dead centuries with the living light of vines and flowers.

"As a matter of course, everybody goes to see the Colosseum by moonlight. The great charm of the ruin under this condition is, that the imagination is substituted for sight; and the mind for the eye. The essential character of moonlight is hard, rather than soft. The line between light and shadow is sharply defined, and there is no gradation of color. Blocks and walls of silver are bordered by, and spring out of chasms of blackness. But moonlight shrouds the Colosseum in mystery. It opens deep vaults of gloom where the eye meets only an ebon wall, but upon which the fancy paints innumerable pictures, in solemn, splendid, and tragic colors. Shadowy forms of emperor and licitor, and vestal virgin and gladiator and martyr, come out of the darkness, and pass before us in long and silent procession. The breezes which blow through the broken arches are changed into voices, and recall the shouts and cries of a vast audience. By day, the Colosseum is an impressive fact; by night, it is a stately vision. By day, it is a lifeless form; by night, a vital thought.

"The Colosseum should, by all means, be seen by a bright starlight, or under the growing sickle of a young moon. The fainter ray and deeper gloom bring out more strongly its visionary and ideal character. When the full moon has blotted out the stars, it fills the vast gulf of the building with a flood of spectral light, which falls with a chilling touch upon the spirit; for then the ruin is like a 'corpse in its shroud of snow,' and the moon is a pale watcher by its side. But when the walls, veiled in deep shadow, seem a part of the darkness in which they are lost, — when the stars are seen through their chasms and breaks, and sparkle along the broken line of the battlements, — the scene becomes another, though the same; more indistinct, yet not so mournful; contracting the sphere of sight, but enlarging that of thought; less burdening, but more suggestive."

"But, under all aspects, — in the blaze of noon, at sunset, by the light of the moon or stars, — the Colosseum stands alone and unapproached. It is the monarch of ruins. It is a great tragedy in stone, and it softens and subdues the mind like a drama of *Æschylus* or *Shakespeare*. It is a colossal type of those struggles of humanity against an irresistible destiny, in which the tragic poet finds the elements of his art. The calamities which crushed the house of *Atreus*, are symbolized in its broken arches and shattered walls. Built of indestructible materials, and seemingly for eternity, — of a size, material, and form, to defy the 'strong hours' which conquer all, it has bowed its head to their touch, and passed into the inevitable cycle of decay. 'And this too shall pass away,' — which the Eastern monarch engraved upon his signet-ring, — is carved upon these Cyclopean blocks. The stones of the Colosseum were once water; and they are now turning into dust. Such is

ever the circle of nature. The solid is changing into the fluid, and the fluid into the solid; and that which is unseen is alone indestructible. He does not see the Colosseum aright, who carries away from it no other impressions than those of form, size, and hue. It speaks an intelligible language to the wiser mind. It rebukes the peevish, and consoles the patient. It teaches us that there are misfortunes which are clothed with dignity, and sorrows that are crowned with grandeur. As the same blue sky smiles upon the ruin which smiled upon the perfect structure, so the same beneficent Providence bends over our shattered hopes and our answered prayers." Vol. i. pp. 305 – 310.

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2. *Free Blacks and Slaves. Would Immediate Abolition be a Blessing? A Letter to the Editor of the Anti-Slavery Advocate.* By a Cambridge Man. London and Liverpool. 1853.

AMONG the many recent publications in England upon the subject of slavery is a modest pamphlet bearing the title given above, which deserves special notice. It is marked by the good sense and moderation with which it treats this most difficult of the questions that perplex our times. It is quite free from the cant, extravagance, and invidiousness which have too often exhibited themselves in the discussion both here and abroad. A man deserves credit who can think and speak calmly in the midst of so much passion, — and still more, if he do so wisely.

The Anti-Slavery Advocate is the organ of that party in England, who are eager to bring about the immediate abolition of slavery in this country. The author of this letter to its editor, having travelled in the United States, and inquired into the condition of the free blacks and of the slaves, has come to the conclusion that immediate abolition, even if it were possible, would be undesirable, and states the grounds of his opinion in a clear, concise, and forcible manner. The facts from which he draws his conclusion are, for the most part, well known in this country; but the close of the letter contains a suggestion which is as new \* as it is simple and important.

"Admitting," he says, "the impossibility of abolishing Slavery in the extreme Southern States till the European races are acclimatized, or the Asiatic

\* The suggestion is anticipated, however, in the article in our present number on "The Possible Amelioration of Slavery," which was written without any knowledge of the existence of the pamphlet here mentioned. It is proper to state, also, that this article, and the present brief notice of the pamphlet by a Cambridge Man, were furnished by two contributors without any concert with each other.